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pality having such advice but is also of value to the engineer in giving him an opportunity to observe the operation of the plants he designs. Under conditions heretofore prevailing the engineer rarely sees the plants he designs after their completion and preliminary test runs, and even in the case of such runs he usually contributes his time and pays his expenses for the visit. In this respect the small works offer a great contrast to the large plants, yet it is the small works which need the supervision of their designer most. We are so certain of the benefits that will follow from the adoption of the policy outlined that we expect to take over before long the systematic control of a small string of works for treating water and sewage, in order to show by practical demonstration what can be accomplished by expert supervision and thus establish the value of expert advice to municipalities owning small plants of this nature.

PAUL HANSEN.

## IS MORE MECHANICAL ENGINEERING SKILL NEEDED BY THE WATERWORKS FRATERNITY?

In a recent conversation with a mechanical engineer a remark was made that many of the mechanical appliances used by water works men were crude, from a mechanical view point, and the opinion was voiced that the mechanical engineer could do much to improve such appliances. The writer is inclined to assent, in part at least, to the correctness of this view and is interested in learning what are the opinions of his fellow water works managers.

Water supply has been considered a civil engineer's specialty, and the mechanical engineer is generally only brought in as an expert for some pumping problem. It is seldom that adequate provision is made for a mechanical engineering force, even in our largest systems, although there are many important mechanical engineering problems to be handled in both maintenance and construction work. The water works field does not attract mechanical engineers, as they consider that the opportunities it offers are too limited to be inviting. The civil engineer is inclined to think he can do the mechanical part in a reasonably efficient manner, and does not willingly call on his mechanical brother. It would be helpful if more mechanical engineering skill were devoted to the water supply work, and we should all encourage and welcome the mechanical men to join in advancing the water supply art.

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An illustration of how helpful to the civil engineer the mechanical mind can be in securing an adequate machine to accomplish a desired end is well set forth in the work of the Board of Water Supply of New York. That organization always has had its mechanical section, and our reliance today in New York City on the automatic closing of a valve a hundred feet or more below the surface, if a break occurs in the piping or appurtenances at the surface, is due to an idea promulgated by a civil engineer and developed into a highly efficient and dependable machine by the mechanical engineers. is but one of many instances where the mechanical engineers' aid has been successfully applied to the Catskill water system problems. Just how the mechanical engineers can be enlisted for our work is a question more easily asked than answered. The writer believes that our water works specialty manufacturers could use to advantage more mechanical engineering skill in the development of their appliances, and that a more liberal spirit among water works men to try equipment that embodies new ideas would be helpful.

W. W. Brush.

## STANDARDIZING UNDERSIZE FIRE COUPLINGS

It is most gratifying to be able to report to the Association the successful standardization of a considerable number of undersized fire couplings, for this is a long step forward in the work which the Association authorized in 1905 and has not always progressed as rapidly as those who have it at heart would welcome. Trenton, N.J., employs the National Standard couplings. Lambertville and High Bridge, N. J., and New Hope, Pa., are suburbs which rely upon Trenton for help in case a fire gets away from the local departments. At High Bridge the threads on the fittings had an outside diameter of 3 inches and there are eight threads to the inch, while at Lambertville and New Hope the outside diameter was  $3\frac{1}{16}$  inches with eight threads to the inch. In these towns there were 191 pairs of hose couplings, 41 play pipes, 18 hydrant hose gates, 16 chemical and pump connections, 113 hydrant caps, 219 hydrant nozzles, 2 siameses, 5 double males, 2 suction reducers and 2 steamer connections to be standardized. The town authorities requested this work to be done and it was accomplished in two and one-half days by three men, with a helper during part of the time to handle the hose.

The results show that two experienced men can standardize